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President: Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Uruguay)

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Annual report of the Administrator for 1990 and programme-level activities (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR FOR 1990 AND PROGRAMME-LEVEL ACTIVITIES (continued) (DP/1991/10 and Add.1-4, DP/1991/11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 57, DP/1990/77)

1. Mr. BLANCA (Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation) recalled that at the previous year's session of the Governing Council, he had welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 44/211 as a means of enabling the United Nations system to respond more effectively to the needs of developing countries. Since those needs had increased because of worsening economic difficulties in most developing countries, particularly in Africa, the operational branch of the United Nations system required further strengthening through closer cooperation and collaboration, increased utilization of national capacities and greater decentralization. While UNDP and other United Nations bodies could not provide long-term solutions to such crucial problems as debt in developing countries, UNDP programmes could, in the current post-cold-war era, play a vital role in that respect. It was particularly essential that the least developed countries, many of which were in Africa, should not become marginalized, and he therefore welcomed the Governing Council's inclusion on its agenda of items concerning the role of UNDP in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, the evaluation of the social dimensions of structural adjustment, the report on the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa, and the report on the least developed countries.

2. Population issues were of great importance in view of the widening gap between the economic performance of developing countries and the continual increase in their populations. The number of people living in absolute poverty, which currently stood at approximately 1.2 billion, could not be allowed to grow. The solution of demographic problems was crucial to economic and social development, and necessitated comprehensive multi-disciplinary programmes that drew on the resources of the entire United Nations system.

3. Poverty reduction was a major concern of operational activities for development. The UNDP Human Development Report 1991 contained statistics showing that remarkable progress could be made when human beings were placed at the centre of the development process. Although some of the statistics and indices in the report had been criticized as being incomplete, outdated or subjective, the report was, in general, a useful means of supplementing the Governing Council's understanding of the problems to be addressed, and its statistics and methods would undoubtedly be updated and refined in future issues. The new era of political and social reform offered new opportunities to mobilize all segments of society in pursuit of an adequate standard of living, a safer and healthier environment, and broader access to health, education, training and employment.

(Mr. Blanca)

4. The plight of many developing countries had been worsened by the problem of refugees and displaced persons, most of whom were women and children. That problem posed a serious challenge which must be taken up by the entire international community. According to the UNDP Administrator's report on refugees, displaced persons and returnees (DP/1991/20), an estimated 20 million people were displaced within their country's territory. The question of overall coordination of the system-wide United Nations response to the problem of refugees and displaced persons would be considered by the Economic and Social Council at its summer session. Those deliberations, as well as the existing capacity of the United Nations system, should be taken fully into account in the Governing Council's decision on the matter.

5. He welcomed the two reports (DP/1991/15 and DP/1991/57) on the human and financial implications of the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) pandemic, which was affecting an increasing number of developing countries. The reports outlined a policy framework for the response of UNDP, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other bodies, to the problem. According to a number of resident coordinators, the issue had mobilized the multi-disciplinary capacities of the United Nations system.

6. The Governing Council's deliberations on the important question of women in development would constitute a major contribution to the subsequent debates in the Economic and Social Council and in the General Assembly. His 1991 annual report to the General Assembly contained a number of strategic recommendations on the subject.

7. One of the strengths of UNDP lay in its capacity to respond to the varying needs of developing countries through the different funds and programmes placed under its authority by the General Assembly. In that context, one of the important questions to be resolved at the current session was that of new successor arrangements for agency support costs. The Governing Council's deliberations would undoubtedly result in a viable arrangement based on the principles established in its decision 90/26 and in paragraph 25 of General Assembly resolution 44/211, which stressed the need for coordination within the United Nations system and for maximum utilization of national capacity.

8. The system as a whole had made significant progress in the implementation of resolution 44/211. A detailed analysis of the country-level impact of the reforms would be carried out within the 1992 comprehensive triennial policy review of operational activities. Moreover, a number of important initiatives had already been undertaken, including the guidance provided to resident coordinators and their colleagues in the field on such programmes and activities as the International Development Strategy, the World Summit for Children and the World Conference on Education for All. The challenges of the 1990s required closer cooperation among United Nations bodies and an ongoing dialogue between the resident coordinators and all partners in the development process. An important step had been taken through the Consultative Committee

(Mr. Blanca)

on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) to foster the team approach by launching a series of inter-agency workshops at the International Centre for Advanced Technical and Vocational Training of the International Labour Office, for resident coordinators and field personnel. Other measures would soon be taken to strengthen cooperation within the United Nations system for the implementation of multisectoral development programmes in accordance with national priorities.

9. Mr. MAJOOR (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Community, said that the Human Development Report 1991, by adding new socially oriented indicators to the indicators traditionally used in determining the wealth of a country, provided UNDP with a new tool with which to better analyse and understand the issue of development. The report stressed that economic growth in developing countries should be sustainable, should benefit all segments of society and should take place through broad-based popular participation and private initiative. It contained a number of refinements of the methodology used in the previous report. However, some aspects of the human development index, such as the combination of income, life expectancy and literacy indicators, required further study and analysis. Although it needed improvement, the human development index already showed the clear linkages between the level of human development and the budget choices made by the Governments of developing countries. That observation led to the conclusion that development policies must be based not only on needs assessments of the recipient countries, but also on popular participation, without which such policies were bound to fail.

10. The newly introduced human freedom index showed a high correlation between human development and human freedom. However, the index must be used cautiously, since the analytical and methodological difficulties related to it were compounded by the fact that data were available for only 88 countries and that they dated back to 1985.

11. The Twelve agreed with the UNDP Administrator that the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade provided an important context for UNDP activities in the coming years. However, UNDP should also draw upon the Declaration adopted at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children, the results of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, and the general philosophy of the Human Development Report as equally important sources of inspiration. The executing sector of the UNDP Administration should be made more fully aware of the substance of those documents. It must also integrate the principles set forth in Governing Council decision 90/34, and particularly the six priority areas mentioned in paragraph 7 of that decision, into its day-to-day work.

12. As noted in the Administrator's report (DP/1991/10), migration as a result of political, economic or environmental conditions or natural or man-made disasters was emerging as an important item on the international

(Mr. Majoor, Netherlands)

agenda, and relief efforts were putting a strain on regular aid budgets. A well-coordinated United Nations response to emergency situations was therefore essential. UNDP should participate actively in discussions on ways of improving such coordination, and the Governing Council, at its 1992 session, should discuss the implications of Economic and Social Council and General Assembly deliberations on the United Nations system's response to emergency situations.

13. The Management Development Programme addressed one of the main impediments to development: the lack of sufficient public-sector management capacities in developing countries. The Twelve were pleased to note that most of the Programme's resources would have been committed by the end of the year, and that there were good prospects for increasing future contributions, inter alia through joint and parallel financing. The Twelve agreed with the Administrator that the efforts of the Programme should concentrate on those countries whose leadership was committed to major reforms calling for substantial institutional capacity-building. However, they wondered whether the Administrator could provide statistics to substantiate the statement that special efforts were being made to increase the proportion of women and third world experts in the Programme's network. The Twelve also requested statistics to back up the statement that national execution was currently the preferred arrangement for project implementation. The transition to national execution should be a gradual process, based on each country's institutional capability and the nature of the advisory services required. The Twelve would also welcome more information on the coordination mechanisms existing between the Management Development Programme and other programmes aimed at strengthening public-sector capacities in developing countries, given the importance of the well-coordinated use of scarce resources.

14. The Twelve supported the efforts of the Division for Women in Development to integrate women-in-development issues into all UNDP activities. They welcomed the indication that there was a growing commitment on the part of field offices and headquarters units to support and develop gender-sensitive projects and programmes across all sectors, but wished that the Administrator had provided the information on which that indication was based. The shift of the responsibility for ensuring that all UNDP work was gender-sensitive from the Division for Women in Development to the operational and policy units and field offices concerned was a necessary and timely development. The Twelve also supported the proposed appointment of subregional women-in-development advisers, as a means of decentralizing technical know-how from headquarters to the field level. However, they would like more information on how such advisers would be recruited and financed. With respect to the proposed introduction and maintenance of a computerized roster of consultants and a resource and reference system on women-in-development issues, the Twelve wondered whether UNDP had consulted with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) on whether the latter was developing similar reference mechanisms. They noted that only 6 of the 114 UNDP resident representatives were women, and hoped that UNDP would increase that figure, as well as the percentage of women in senior posts at headquarters, in the coming years.

(Mr. Majoor, Netherlands)

15. With respect to the role of UNDP in combating AIDS and HIV, the Twelve stressed that UNDP should not duplicate the work being done by the World Health Organization/Global Programme on AIDS (WHO/GPA). Although UNDP must take action to minimize the impact of the epidemic on development, it should confine that action to the areas most relevant to its mandate, in close coordination with WHO/GPA and other programmes. Unfortunately, the Administrator's note (DP/1991/15) did not provide clear information on how UNDP efforts fit into those of WHO/GPA, what kind of common field activities were undertaken, and whether the training activities and studies organized by UNDP were being coordinated with WHO.

16. The Twelve recalled that through its decision 90/23, the Governing Council had merged the Committee of the Whole and its Working Group into a Standing Committee for Programme Matters. He hoped that the new, streamlined structure would enable the Governing Council to reach decisions more effectively and efficiently, so that UNDP could better respond to the challenges of the 1990s.

17. Mr. KELLAND (Denmark) said that the Human Development Report 1991 contained a number of well-thought-out points of view on which further work could be based. The human development index was particularly important, since it could be used to identify areas where more efforts were needed. However, his delegation did not agree with the report's conclusions on military expenditure. It was not reasonable to ask industrialized countries to use savings generated by the reduction of military expenditure for development purposes when developing countries continued to allocate funds for military purposes. In many poor countries, military budgets were two to three times higher than health and education budgets.

18. In its decision 90/34, the Governing Council had singled out six areas in which UNDP should focus on building and strengthening national capacity. Four of those areas directly reflected the trend towards increased emphasis on human development. His delegation hoped that the country programmes for the fifth programming cycle would fully reflect that decision in such a way that UNDP assistance would have a significant impact on progress in human development.

19. By agreeing on the six areas, the Governing Council had provided a basis for the better utilization and development of the Programme's comparative advantages. However, while the areas on which the Programme should concentrate had been identified, the actions within those areas in which UNDP had a comparative advantage had not. That problem should be addressed as soon as possible, and the Administrator should be requested to submit a report on the subject to the Council at its thirty-ninth session.

20. At the macro-level, UNDP should provide capacity-building assistance to both core and line ministries in order to enable them to engage in a stronger policy dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions. While UNDP could not

(Mr. Kelland, Denmark)

compete with the World Bank in the provision of basic policy advice on the links between macroeconomic and sectoral policies, both UNDP and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) could play an important supplementary role in that area.

21. With a few exceptions, UNDP and the specialized agencies could not play a meaningful role at the sectoral level. That did not mean, however, that the specialized agencies did not continue to have a major normative role in providing guidance to those who helped formulate sectoral policy at the field level. On the other hand, UNDP and the specialized agencies had comparative advantages in providing policy advice and technical assistance at the subsectoral level.

22. UNDP and the specialized agencies did not have the necessary resources or capacity to provide assistance to large-scale projects involving the delivery of such public services as education or agricultural extension services. Such tasks were better left to the World Bank, the regional development banks and, in some cases, UNICEF. Consequently, UNDP should increasingly withdraw from projects of that kind.

23. The Programme and the specialized agencies had a comparative advantage with respect to management and support-intensive pilot projects and experimental development programmes. Field activities that required a great deal of technical assistance were directly relevant to relatively short-term projects supported partly by expatriate advisers on one- to three-year contracts. Moreover, United Nations agencies could not provide sound policy advice and capacity-building assistance at the subsectoral level if they did not also gain implementation experience in those fields.

24. His delegation questioned whether UNDP had a comparative advantage in the field of private-sector assistance. Assistance to private-sector development should be concentrated on areas where the Programme's comparative strengths could be utilized. That meant the provision of technical assistance in policy formulation and the drafting of legislation conducive to private-sector growth. His delegation had the impression that important activities were being undertaken without sufficient guidance from the Governing Council, and it suggested that the Administrator, in an annex to his general report to the Council at its thirty-ninth session, should provide further information on the volume and nature of the Programme's assistance to private-sector development.

25. His Government had commissioned a report that contained a proposal on how to avoid the proliferation of UNDP projects and, at the same time, obtain greater focus in country programmes. Within each country programme, UNDP assistance should be concentrated on a limited number of sectors, for which long-term institutional support agreements should be concluded. Such agreements would give continuity to United Nations assistance projects and help ensure that the necessary external aid would actually be forthcoming.

(Mr. Kelland, Denmark)

26. The functioning of UNDP assistance must be seen in the context of United Nations operational activities as a whole, and the overall framework for such activities should be conducive to efficiency and effectiveness. The Nordic countries had proposed that an international development council should be established to discuss matters concerning UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Discussions of the work of those bodies in one single governing forum would ensure better coordination and a more efficient division of labour. However, the proposal to establish an international development council must be considered in conjunction with the proposal to establish, for each of the five agencies, a small governing body that could provide them with the necessary support and guidance. The Nordic countries had also proposed that the funding system for United Nations operational activities should be revised through the introduction of assessed contributions, negotiated pledges and voluntary contributions.

27. Mr. LING (Observer for the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that UNDP had proved to be an authoritative and representative forum in which vitally important problems of international economic relations could be considered. His delegation supported such promising trends in UNDP activities as the strengthening of the Programme's coordinating role in the United Nations technical assistance system, the development of a mechanism for harmonizing programmes with the economic development priorities of recipient countries, the enhancement of the authority of UNDP resident representatives in developing countries, and the strengthening of the Programme's mandate in the areas of supervision and assessment. However, the future success of the Programme would be closely linked to its contribution to the solution of urgent problems of international social and economic development.

28. For the Byelorussian SSR, the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant on 26 April 1986 had been a national tragedy. Five out of six of the Republic's regions had been severely affected by radiation. Twenty-seven towns and nearly 3,000 settlements, with a total population of 2.2 million, were situated in the affected areas. About 20 per cent of the Republic's most productive agricultural lands and about 20 per cent of its forests were in the area of long-term radioactive contamination.

29. The Republic's relatively small national capacity did not enable it to take all the necessary measures to alleviate the acute social and economic problems caused by the Chernobyl disaster. The resettlement of hundreds of thousands of people from contaminated areas, the construction of new settlements, the creation of new employment opportunities in habitable areas, and the provision of basic social services were all highly complex tasks. Moreover, the need to allocate enormous financial resources to overcome the consequences of the Chernobyl accident was severely impeding the Republic's transition to a market economy.

(Mr. Ling, Observer, Byelorussian SSR)

30. The Byelorussian SSR welcomed the international community's solidarity with the victims of Chernobyl, and appreciated the support and assistance provided by parliaments, Governments, organizations, companies and individuals. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/190, the United Nations system had begun to formulate a programme for coordinating activities to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. Such efforts would not be successful without the participation of UNDP.

31. As a donor country, the Byelorussian SSR had contributed to the implementation of United Nations multilateral technical assistance programmes. In the light of the disastrous effects of the Chernobyl accident, the Byelorussian SSR appealed to the Governing Council to grant it the status of a recipient country. The Republic would, of course, continue to fulfil its voluntary obligations to UNDP. The constructive role that the Programme could play in addressing the consequences of the disaster would encourage the Republic to become a more active participant in future UNDP activities.

32. Mr. SHEN Jueren (China) said his delegation was pleased to note that programme delivery in 1990 had reached $845 million, which represented an increase of $112 million over 1989. Nevertheless, there were ways in which the Programme's implementation of its multilateral operational activities could be improved. Human resources development should become an important component of the development process, and international cooperation in that field should be strengthened. UNDP should respect the sovereignty of recipient countries, capitalize on its comparative advantages in the area of technical assistance, endeavour to meet developing countries' various needs, and, to the extent possible, use the limited financial resources to carry out training and technical cooperation activities conducive to human resources development in developing countries.

33. Many countries had objected to the content of the Human Development Report 1991, particularly the human freedom index. His delegation believed that ideology should not be introduced into operational activities, and that UNDP should concentrate on ways to promote economic revitalization and growth in developing countries. The report's reference to China was both inappropriate and unacceptable, since it had no relation to the facts.

34. His delegation supported the efforts to make national execution a long-term development objective. However, as recipient countries differed in their execution capabilities, there should be no expectations of quick success. During and after the transitional period, UNDP should continue to assist the Governments of recipient countries in implementing their programmes, to train managerial personnel and to establish detailed rules for the promotion of national execution, so as to enable recipient countries to shoulder their responsibilities as soon as possible.

(Mr. Shen Jueren, China)

35. His delegation supported the idea of conducting further research on agency support costs, which could lead to a solution acceptable to all. It was of the opinion that total expenditure should remain below 14 per cent of programme resources in the next programming cycle.

36. UNDP should formulate an effective funding strategy and should open up various funding channels so as to ensure the financial resources necessary for assistance. In addition, resources should be allocated in a fair and reasonable manner, with a view to accelerating the development process in the developing countries. UNDP should continue to attach importance to its advantages, such as universality, neutrality, impartiality and the grant nature of its assistance, and should concentrate, to the extent possible, on country programmes, especially those of countries which had a per capita gross national product (GNP) of less than $750. Appropriate consideration should be given to the special needs of the least developed countries. Furthermore, practical measures should be adopted to ensure that all developing countries received equal benefits from development.

37. Technical cooperation among developing countries could play an important role in enhancing the individual and collective power of self-reliance of developing countries. Much remained to be done before the potential of developing countries was fully utilized. The field visits contemplated by the Standing Committee for Programme Matters would enable developing countries to exchange experiences and information gained through cooperation, and to seek more opportunities in that regard. That, in turn, would promote North-South exchanges. It was to be hoped that the developed countries and international organizations would devote greater attention and assistance to technical cooperation among developing countries.

38. China and UNDP had enjoyed fruitful cooperation over the years. China's second UNDP country programme had ended in 1990, and actual programme delivery had been $127 million. His delegation thanked the Governing Council and UNDP for their support. The third country programme, which would begin in 1991, had been formulated through close coordination between his Government and UNDP, and was based on the strategic goals and priorities established by the recently adopted Eighth Five-Year Plan and Ten-Year Programme. It was to be hoped that the Governing Council would approve the third country programme for China at the current session.

39. The 1990s represented a crucial decade for the Chinese people in their efforts to build socialism with Chinese characteristics. The Ten-Year Programme and the Eighth Five-Year Plan for economic and social development provided for the GNP achieved during the 1980s to be quadrupled by the end of the century. China intended to continue its policy of instituting reforms and opening up to the outside world. Currently, the country's political situation was stable, the Chinese people were leading peaceful and happy lives, and the economy was developing towards prosperity.

40. Mr. WRIGHT (Canada) said that, while not all members of the Governing Council would agree with every aspect of the Human Development Report 1991, and while the lack of up-to-date statistics had hampered the preparation of indices which accurately reflected the current situation, he believed that the indices presented could help the Governing Council to achieve new insights into development issues. He therefore encouraged UNDP to pursue the approach reflected in the report.

41. In the past two years, the Governing Council had developed an enabling infrastructure by establishing the financial parameters and themes for the fifth programming cycle, developing a new support-cost regime, reviewing the management structure of UNDP and establishing a Standing Committee for Programme Matters. It was necessary to ensure that UNDP continued to operate effectively and efficiently in order to achieve its goal of increasing the productivity of the poor.

42. It was essential for country programmes to address specific development needs, to establish priorities and to concentrate on areas which had the greatest potential for sustainable development. If the programmes were too diffuse, they could not be either efficient or effective. It was regrettable that full support did not yet exist in the Council for the proposal to have programme criteria and focus discussed by the Standing Committee on Programme Matters. Agreement on criteria was an issue of good management and did not impinge on the right of Governments to establish priorities.

43. He commended UNFPA for its excellent advocacy role in the population field. The objectives of the Amsterdam Declaration could be achieved if there was clear evidence of a growing capacity to implement programmes in the field and, in particular, within UNFPA.

44. Canada also had a particular interest in UNIFEM and believed that it had become an effective agency in a critical area of development. However, his delegation did not support the recommendation to integrate UNIFEM into the UNDP regional bureaux, as the existing structure of UNIFEM was part of the reason for its success.

45. In seeking to resolve the issue of successor arrangements for agency support costs, it was important to ensure that the debate was not delayed for technical reasons. If the members of the Governing Council could agree on working figures, they could also agree to re-examine those figures in 1993, after some experience had been gained.

46. Lastly, his delegation looked forward to the contribution which UNDP could make to the follow-up to the World Summit for Children. It would welcome comments from the Administrator on any linkage between the Plan of Action adopted at the World Summit and the implementation of the recommendations of the Human Development Report 1991.

47. Mr. VELOSO (Mozambique) said that the comparative advantages of UNDP in the development field had earned it wide appreciation from developing and developed countries alike. As a result of new political and economic realities, there was a need for UNDP to play a central role in helping developing countries to strengthen and utilize their own human resources potential, to acquire and adapt new and appropriate technologies, and to foster national institutions capable of dealing with internal and external challenges.

48. With the successful conclusion of the discussions on the fifth programming cycle, the basic framework for UNDP action had been agreed upon. He reaffirmed his country's support for UNDP activities, particularly its clear field orientation and special focus on the poor countries. His delegation also attached importance to improving the capacity of UNDP to respond adequately through innovative measures and efforts. Accordingly, it was time for UNDP to be given a chance to respond, to the best of its ability, to the challenges which would arise in the fifth programming cycle. It was imperative to heed the Administrator's repeated appeals concerning the agreed targets for core resources.

49. Quality, local impact and sustainability were essential criteria for United Nations projects and programmes. The national execution modality, as referred to in General Assembly resolution 44/211 and Governing Council decision 90/34, was paramount in that regard. His delegation saw the promotion of national execution as an evolutionary process in which the United Nations development system could assist recipient countries in assuming full responsibility for and direct management of programme and project implementation. He noted with satisfaction the proposal made by the Administrator to establish programme support units to provide administrative and procurement services. He was also greatly encouraged by the positive results achieved so far by UNDP-sponsored workshops and other training initiatives in several African countries. Those results were tangible evidence of the need for and viability of efforts to strengthen management capacities for national execution. Mozambique viewed the programme support units as indispensable tools for the coordination and effective promotion of national capacities in the formulation and implementation of programmes and projects, while providing for the mobilization and utilization of local capacities. The Administrator should include in his next annual report a separate chapter on that issue, with special focus on ways and means to promote national execution through the programme support units.

50. Recalling that the final review of the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 was scheduled to take place in September 1991, he expressed gratitude to the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa and to UNDP as a whole for their support of the Programme of Action. It was to be hoped that UNDP support for Africa would be maintained or increased in the next few years, especially in connection with the successor arrangements for the Programme of Action.

(Mr. Veloso, Mozambique)

51. The existing special initiatives should be pursued and new ones could be considered, taking into account the mobilization of additional resources. The national technical cooperation assessment and programmes should continue, since they were a powerful tool for the coordination and rationalization of technical assistance. Another UNDP initiative which deserved strong support was the Social Dimensions of Adjustment project. He welcomed the collection of data on social indicators in 10 recipient countries as a first step. It was essential to provide that project with sufficient resources to allow it to make progress and be expanded.

52. His delegation attached great importance to the role of UNDP in questions pertaining to displaced persons, refugees and returnees. The task was to ensure that UNDP was technically and institutionally prepared to integrate emergency, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities into the development process of the country concerned. External assistance for the reintegration and normalization of the lives of displaced persons and returnees was almost non-existent. That was an area in which UNDP might be qualified to assist the Governments concerned. The need was even more acute at a time when the end of many protracted regional conflicts, including conflicts in southern Africa, was approaching.

53. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the recent peace agreements in Angola. Likewise, his Government remained committed to the search for an urgent end to the war in Mozambique, and was currently involved in the sixth round of peace negotiations held under the auspices of the Italian Government.

54. In the light of the prospects for a new era of reconstruction, cooperation and development in southern Africa, UNDP should be duly prepared so that it could effectively respond to forthcoming requests from Governments of the region. Recent UNDP responses to disasters in various parts of the world illustrated its ability to provide the appropriate assistance in designing integrated programmes which linked emergency and development operations. The Programme should intensify in-house consultations in order to fully benefit from positive experiences acquired in various countries and regions.

55. Future issues of the Human Development Report should be discussed in the Governing Council once every two or three years. As for the Human Development Report 1991, his delegation supported its fundamental principles and concurred with its emphasis on the non-economic factors of development. However, the report had not sufficiently addressed the question of the impact of war on a country's development, particularly its devastating human consequences. Furthermore, the proposal to restructure national budgets and international aid in favour of human development was only a partial solution to development issues. Poverty could not be treated merely as an internal political problem; its economic dimension must also be taken into account. In many developing countries, the inequities of the international economic system were also a major factor. International cooperation and human solidarity were needed in order to translate the various recommendations into concrete actions.

(Mr. Veloso, Mozambique)

56. UNDP should continue promoting human development goals, and deserved the support of all in that area. It could certainly rely on his Government's continued cooperation at the field and headquarters levels.

57. Mr. BASSIN (Finland) said that his delegation agreed with the view expressed in the Human Development Report 1991 and in the Administrator's statement at the Council's 20th meeting that the 1990s might be the era of a new development ethos, a time to compensate for earlier mistakes or omissions and to create new policies for a better world. The International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade and the results of the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly should be viewed as the starting-point for the work of UNDP during the 1990s. His delegation endorsed the observations of the representative of the Netherlands, speaking on behalf of the European Economic Community, in that regard.

58. By focusing on people as the ultimate beneficiaries of development, on the protection of the natural environment, and on the responsibility of the developing countries for their own development, UNDP now had the opportunity to give practical meaning to the vision of the Programme as the central development agency and funding organization of the United Nations development system. Once UNDP's proper role had been defined, a strategy for UNDP should be elaborated, as recommended in the report entitled "A strategy-based senior management structure for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)" (DP/1991/50).

59. The Administrator had proposed a conceptual discussion on the criteria for allocating resources in preparation for the sixth programming cycle. His delegation proposed that the discussion should be turned into a debate on UNDP as a whole, with a view to determining its course during the 1990s. The report on the Nordic United Nations project contained proposals which could serve as starting-points for such a debate. It presented recommendations about the respective roles of UNDP and the specialized agencies, and proposed that the central funding role of UNDP should be made more effective, that there should be an enhanced focus on and utilization of the comparative advantages of UNDP, and that UNDP should provide more policy advice and increase dialogues with recipient countries, taking full advantage of the existing analytical capacity and sectoral expertise of the United Nations system. The reform of UNDP must be viewed in the context of the reform of all United Nations operational activities for development, and of the United Nations system as a whole.

60. Increased financial resources were needed to enable UNDP to play the central funding role envisaged for it, and bold new financing methods must be found, possibly including negotiated pledges as envisaged in the report on the Nordic United Nations project. That report also contained suggestions to enable Member States to engage in a much more continuous dialogue with the Administrator than the current Governing Council sessions permitted. Financing innovations should also aim at improving burden-sharing among donor

(Mr. Bassin, Finland)

countries, since the current system was a source of substantial criticism in his own and other donor countries. Unless changes were made, the 1990s could see a period of stagnation in multilateral technical assistance efforts throughout the United Nations, and the increased marginalization of UNDP in the developing world.

61. The Human Development Report 1991 represented an improvement over the previous report. The introduction of the political dimension of development in the form of the human freedom index was a courageous and necessary step. He hoped that further research and experience would bring about refinements in the techniques of compiling the human development index, the human freedom index and any composite indices that might be formulated. The main lesson of the report - applicable to recipient and donor countries alike - was that the eradication of poverty in developing countries was more a question of identifying and implementing the right policies than of simply increasing the amount of financial and other resources devoted to the task. The next issue of the Human Development Report should provide guidance for the debate on criteria for the sixth programming cycle and on the future role and comparative advantages of UNDP in the global development effort.

62. The Human Development Report 1991 was another reminder of how such issues as the eradication of poverty, environmental matters and the role of women in development were inextricably linked with all efforts to promote development. Those issues must be the focal point of all UNDP's undertakings.

63. He underscored the vital importance of national execution on development cooperation, for it underlined the recipient country's responsibility for its own development, emphasized that development assistance should be provided in support of national development efforts, and enabled Governments to reassume responsibility for projects and programmes, a responsibility they should never have lost, and to ensure the coordination and optimal use of external assistance. His delegation therefore welcomed the move towards a programme approach in UNDP's operations, whereby programming would be derived more from national priorities and the needs of the recipient economy as a whole than from the preferences of individual decision-makers.

64. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) said that international economic cooperation was more important than ever and that the United Nations development system, and UNDP in particular, should play a greater role in that area. His delegation strongly supported the three guiding principles enunciated by the Administrator at the Council's 20th meeting.

65. The concept of technical cooperation had reached philosophical maturity as discussions in various forums had helped to define its role in the 1990s. He drew particular attention in that connection to General Assembly resolution 44/211 and Council decision 90/34.

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

66. The Human Development Report made it clear that people should be placed at the centre of development, and provided useful suggestions for promoting human development. His delegation welcomed UNDP's focus on the needs of the poorer countries, particularly the least developed countries, and on national execution and the programme approach as important means to enable developing countries to achieve sustainable development and self-reliance.

67. Because the resources available to UNDP would increase only slightly in the coming years, it was essential to streamline its structure in order to allocate the maximum possible resources for the actual provision of assistance to developing countries. It was also vital for UNDP to deliver programmes and projects of higher quality, focusing on areas where it had a comparative advantage. His delegation was therefore encouraged that the Administrator had proposed a net reduction in the administrative core budget for 1992-1993. Adherence to the principle of cost-effectiveness demanded that the Council should regularly meet at its headquarters in New York, as that would permit the more active participation of delegations and would yield financial savings.

68. He commended UNDP for its efforts to familiarize policy makers at various levels with the human development approach through seminars and workshops, and for its collaborative efforts with some recipient Governments to prepare comprehensive human development country studies and/or strategies. However, since UNDP was responsible for funding technical cooperation, its primary responsibility should, as far as possible, be confined to the economic development of recipient countries. Accordingly, his delegation questioned whether it was appropriate for UNDP to divert what were limited financial resources to assist with the establishment of centres for human rights in developing countries. In that connection, his Government had announced in April that it intended to devote particular attention to the following considerations when allocating official development assistance: firstly, whether a recipient country was striving to promote democratization and a market-oriented economy and whether it safeguarded basic human rights and freedoms; secondly, the decisions it was making regarding military expenditures. That policy had been introduced to help countries make full use of the human and other resources available to them to promote economic and social development.

69. Despite internal and international efforts to revitalize the development of the least developed countries, they faced economic stagnation. His delegation welcomed the decision of UNDP to increase its allocation to the poorer countries during the fifth programming cycle. One major challenge was how to help the countries concerned formulate an efficient strategy for utilizing all available resources in such priority areas as the eradication of poverty, rural development, and the building of an indigenous human and institutional capacity. His country was stepping up its assistance to the least developed countries through bilateral and multilateral channels.

70. Mr. FERNANDEZ-PITA (Spain) said that his delegation fully endorsed the statement by the Netherlands representative on behalf of the 12 members of the European Economic Community, and hoped that Community cooperation with respect to the operational activities of the United Nations system would gradually increase. Underscoring his Government's support for UNDP, he said that it hoped to continue increasing its financial contribution as its resources permitted.

71. His delegation welcomed the Human Development Report 1991, and hoped that in future issues the analytical methods and tools would be refined to yield increasingly more useful data. The inclusion of information on the human rights situation in each country was useful as a measure of the well-being of its citizens. However, it was unfortunate that the human freedom index had been based not on information provided by the United Nations, but on data from a private source, and that even that data had been presented in a distorted manner. An objective initial criterion would be the number of United Nations human rights instruments signed by each country, as well as the number of clauses or protocols indicating its acceptance of international monitoring of respect for human rights in its territory.

72. Turning to the annual report of the Administrator for 1990 and programme-level activities (DP/1991/10), he said that his delegation fully agreed that the International Development Strategy for the Fourth Development Decade should constitute the fundamental framework for UNDP's activities in the coming years. It was also essential to bear in mind the Declaration adopted at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, and the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the World Summit for Children.

73. He recalled that Council decision 90/34 had identified six priority areas on which UNDP should focus to strengthen national capacity. His delegation was deeply aware of the serious problems confronting the least developed countries, particularly those in Africa, and agreed that they merited the priority accorded them by the Governing Council. It also wished to underscore the importance which the Council attached to the development of the Mediterranean region. Reiterating his country's commitment to assist the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, which were receiving a decreasing level of resources compared with other areas, he drew attention to a number of multilateral programmes in the region to which his Government contributed. His country supported the principles which should guide development cooperation during the 1990s and would devote particular attention to the six priority areas which had been identified, the environment in particular. Improved coordination among the various United Nations agencies providing disaster relief was highly desirable, and UNDP should play its proper role in that regard.

74. In conclusion, he said that the Management Development Programme, which his country supported, was of particular importance in helping recipient countries strengthen their institutional capacity, which was the foundation for self-reliant and sustained development.

75. Mr. MUNTASSER (Observer for the Libyan Arab Jamihiriya) said that his country had joined with UNDP in many projects on a cost-sharing basis, in such important sectors as agriculture, industry and training. Despite the relative success of the Programme, there had nevertheless been a number of problems, such as a deterioration in the standard of the expertise provided by the United Nations system, rising costs and the Programme's inability to train national personnel for purposes of self-reliance. The Libyan Arab Jamihiriya had always stressed the need to develop international cooperation on the basis of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It was to be regretted that the Human Development Report 1991 had relied on a single source in establishing the human freedom index, namely The World Guide to Human Rights by Charles Humana. There could be no doubt that the author had been biased and that he had focused on certain criteria that were not characterized by universality and impartiality, as could be seen from his remarks on the African and Muslim countries. The book had ignored the sublime moral values introduced by the revealed religions and had adopted particular criteria that were primarily applicable to the countries that had established those criteria. It had ignored the other important norms that mankind as a whole was seeking to meet, as exemplified by the well-being of peoples and their security and integrity. It had made no mention of the provision of educational and health services, of standards of living, of the provision of housing and employment or of increased life expectancy as a result of improved economic and social conditions. Had the book employed fair criteria, it would not have been possible to place certain countries in the high-freedom ranking, particularly those that suffered, as was known to the entire world, from such evils as crime, unemployment and indecency, and whose peoples suffered from homelessness and discrimination in employment and standards of living.

76. Much that was contained in the Human Development Report 1991 was not consonant with the true situation in his country, and it was to be regretted that there had been no consultation with the countries and regional groupings concerned, as had been requested by the Governing Council in its decision 90/13. The Jamihiriya was of the view that the inclusion of the human freedom index in the 1991 report was a dangerous matter, and it regretted that UNDP officials had participated in its drafting. It called upon the Council to withdraw that part of the report based on Mr. Humana's book.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.